

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 076 576

SP 006 511

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TITLE Patterned Teaching Behavior: A Study of Dyadic Infracommunication.  
PUB DATE Feb 73  
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 1973  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS \*Communication (Thought Transfer); \*Nonverbal Communication; \*Sex Differences; \*Student Teacher Relationship; Teacher Behavior; \*Verbal Ability

ABSTRACT

This is one of a series of proxemic studies made in laboratory, natural, or academic settings by the researcher with the Dennis Infracommunication Analysis Device to observe, classify, record, and analyze dyadic infracommunication, including verbal and nonverbal modes. The focus was on communicative behavior of teacher and pupil, student teacher and pupil, and teacher and student teacher interaction. The researcher observed 2,633 dyads at an elementary school and recorded sex, race, status, position, locomotion, spatial distance, angle of orientation, gaze, smile, touch, and audible transmissions. Resulting empirical data showed communication patterns varied by sex, race, and status, revealing patterns of teaching behavior. (Four tables of data are included.) (Author)

FORM 8510

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

ED 076576

# Abstract

## Patterned Teaching Behavior: A Study of Dyadic Infracommunication

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This is one of a series of proxemic studies made in laboratory, natural or academic settings by the researcher with the Dennis Infracommunication Analysis Device (DIAD) to observe, classify, record and analyze dyadic infracommunication, including audible and inaudible modes. The focus is on communicative behavior manifested by persons of 3 statuses, teachers, student teachers, and pupils, interacting in dyads across status within and across race and sex. The researcher observed 2633 dyads at a desegregated elementary school, recording sex, race, status, position, locomotion, interpersonal spatial distance, angle of orientation, gaze, smile, touch and audible transmissions. Resulting empirical data shows communication patterns varied by sex, race and status, revealing patterns of teaching behavior.

Paper presented at the American Education Research Association meeting in New Orleans, March 1, 1973.

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Introduction

---This is one of a series of proxemic studies made by the researcher to investigate communication (verbal and non-verbal behavior) in natural, academic, and laboratory settings with the DIAD (Dennis, 1971, 1972).

Research in Teacher Education: A Symposium from the American Educational Research Association emphasizes that teaching behaviors must be researched empirically. "The problem which confronts those concerned with research on teacher education involves a quest for a more dependable knowledge of teaching behavior (Smith 1971, p. 1)." McGraw (1969) states that detailed and objective description of behavior patterns used by man is still largely tentative. This study reports objective descriptions of behavior patterns of student teachers, their supervising teachers, and the pupils of both when engaged in dyadic (two-person) interaction.

Behavior communicates (Sommer, 1969); communicative behavior, conscious and unconscious, is culturally patterned (Hall, 1959, 1966). Communication occurs in transmissions along many infracommunication channels in modes such as sight, touch, and hearing; the transmissions occurring concomitantly, intermittently or in overlapping intervals. Transmission along one infra-communication channel may contradict, modify or reinforce transmissions on other channels. The sum of infracommunication transmissions occurring at a given time make up the complete message. There is need for basic research

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in the field (Birdwhistell, 1968, 1970), particularly in proxemics, the science of man's use of space (Hall, 1970). Some infracommunication measures such as gaze, interpersonal spatial distance and angle of orientation have been found to be indicants of affect, regard, liking, and degree of intimacy between dyadic partners (Argyle and Dean, 1965; Hall, 1966; Goldberg, Kiesler, and Collins, 1969).

### Problem

Since verbal and non-verbal communication behavior is so important in the teaching learning process, and teaching is dyadic (Smith, 1971), this study asked the question: What are the patterns of infracommunication evidenced in cross status dyads composed of people of three statuses, teacher, student teacher, and pupil, in and out of classrooms at an elementary school. The problem was to describe this infracommunication by observation, classification, recording and analysis.

### DIAD

The Dennis Infracommunication Analysis Device (DIAD) was developed by the author to facilitate observation, classification, recording, and analysis of infracommunication, was based on the theory and work of Hall (1970) and the communication theory and kinesics work of Birdwhistell (1968, 1970), and was structured and shaped during initial observations made of human and non-human subjects in laboratory and natural settings indoors and outdoors.

### Subjects

The Ss were 12 white student teachers (11 female and one male), their 12 supervising female teachers (11 white and one Black) and their pupils observed interacting in classrooms and outside in areas such as library,

hall, cafeteria and grounds at a desegregated elementary school. The pupil population ratio was 32% Black and 68% white, and the sex ratio for pupils was 50/50.

### Method

Observations were made during 50 hours within a two-week period, in the morning and afternoon, as Ss interacted dyadically across status within and across sex and race. Data on Ss sex, race, status, position, locomotion, gaze, interpersonal spatial distance, angle of orientation, kinesics such as smile, kinesthetics such as hug, and transmission in an audible mode apparent to the observer were collected by simple observation with the DIAD.

With random selection of class and time, the observer went where the appointed class was, sitting or standing in the least conspicuous place available and refraining from initiating verbal, tactile or eye contact with the Ss as they were observed interacting in the calssroom and outside. Subjects were not aware of the nature of observer's interest and recording. The observer first sought to extinguish effects of her presence on the subjects. After the Ss appeared to be habituated to the presence of the observer, the data collection period began. Observer reliability was over 90% on all variables.

Selection of dyads for observation was by the sequential spatial scan technique developed by the researcher for use with the DIAD. Though initial observations were made in spring of the year, data reported here was collected the following fall, on 2633 dyads. The data, in numerical DIAD coding, was processed by computer. Chi square was used as a test of

significance at the .05 level when appropriate.

### Results

Empirical data gave objective description of communication behavior. Subjects interacted dyadically in 19 combinations across status (Figure 1). Infracommunication data reveal patterns varying along dimensions of sex, race, and status (Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). Interesting findings are: The instructors interacted more frequently ( $p < .05$ ) with male pupils ( $n = 1367$ ) than with female pupils ( $n = 947$ ). The teacher and student teacher interacted with black pupils ( $n = 937$ ) more ( $p < .05$ ) than would be expected from the racial balance of the school population and the sample. The white female student teacher interacted with greater frequency with the white male pupil ( $n = 383$ ), but interacted most ( $p < .05$ ) with the Black male pupils ( $n = 347$ ) considering the 32:68 racial ratio and 50:50 sex ratio of the pupils in the school. The white female student teacher also interacts at a more intimate interpersonal spatial distance with Black pupils ( $n = 531$ ,  $d = 1328$  mm) than with white pupils ( $n = 666$ ,  $d = 2515$  mm). The white female student teacher was closer ( $n = 1197$ ,  $d = 1997$  mm) than any other instructors interacting with pupils. Conversely, the white male student teacher was most distant ( $n = 83$ ,  $d = 4368$  mm) of the instructors communicating with pupils. The Black female pupil interacted at smaller interpersonal spatial distance with the white female student teacher ( $n = 184$ ,  $d = 1250$  mm) and the white female teacher ( $n = 129$ ,  $d = 1540$  mm) than with the Black female teacher ( $n = 11$ ,  $d = 2490$  mm), or with the white male student teacher ( $n = 14$ ,  $d = 6220$  mm). Black pupils interacted at a less intimate inter-

personal spatial distance with the Black female teacher ( $n = 27$ ,  $d = 3781$  mm) than with their other female instructors, which is in accord with Baxter's (1970) finding that Black dyads interacted at greater interpersonal spatial distance than did white dyads. Black male pupils interacted at a closer mean interpersonal spatial distance ~~with the white male student teacher~~ ( $n = 11$ ,  $d = 1660$  mm) than did other pupils. Instructors had greater mean distance in teacher-student teacher dyads ( $n = 319$ ,  $d = 428$ ) than they did in instructor-pupil dyads ( $n = 2314$ ,  $d = 2404$  mm). Distances reported above are mean distance.

Thirteen percent of the dyads composed of a Black female teacher and a white female student teacher had zero distance or physical contact. Less than 3% of the white female student teacher - white female teacher dyads and the white female teacher - white male student teacher dyads were at zero distance, i.e., touching.

Data show Blacks touch more than whites. In addition, Blacks touch more across than within race in across status dyads. Initial observations in the school showed that Black pupils touch more in within status dyads than do whites (Dennis, and Powell, 1972).

Angle of orientation varies in teacher-student teacher dyads by sex and race. The white male student teacher and the white female teacher communicate most frequently at an angle of  $45^\circ$ , whereas other instructor dyads have a  $90^\circ$  modal angle of orientation.

The modal angle of orientation of most pupil-instructor dyads was at  $90^\circ$ . The white male student teacher had a modal angle of orientation in dyads

with white female pupils of 0 degree, or facing. The male student teacher-Black female pupils had a less intimate modal angle of orientation than the norm, at 120°. The modal angle of orientation in white male student teacher-male pupil dyads was 180° or shoulder to shoulder, which is less confrontive than interaction with female pupils.

Modal gaze of Ss in most of the dyads was at media or work of the dyadic partner. The modal gaze of the white male student teacher interacting with white female pupils and Black pupils was viewing the dyadic partner peripherally; the Black males in these dyads had a similar modal gaze. The modal gaze of white female instructors in dyads was eye to eye contact. Modal gaze of the Black female teacher was at the eyes of a white female student teacher, who viewed her peripherally, in modal measures.

Analysis and interpretation of the vast quantities of data obtained is continuing in this, the first research to examine all observable infra-communication in a teaching-learning situation; the patterns of teaching behavior.

The results are not generalized to other Ss and situations, but there is no reason why the same method and instrument could not be used effectively to research dyadic infracommunication and interpersonal relations in similar situations and in other areas. The author is doing so, and recommends this to others.



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	WFP	WMP	BFP	BMP	WFS	WMS
WFT	WFT WFP	WFT WMP	WFT BFP	WFT BMP	WFT WFS	WFT WMS
BFT	BFT WFP	BFT WMP	BFT BFP	BFT BMP	BFT WFS	
WFS	WFS WFP	WFS WMP	WFS BFP	WFS BMP		
WMS	WMS WFP	WMS WMP	WMS BFP	WMS BMP		

WFT = a white female teacher  
 BFT = a black female teacher  
 WFS = a white female student teacher  
 WMS = a white male student teacher  
 WFP = a white female pupil  
 WMP = a white male pupil  
 BFP = a Black female pupil  
 BMP = a Black male pupil

Figure 1. The 19 Possible Categories of Cross Status Dyads Between Ss in the Sample Population.

Dyadic Ss	n Dyads	% of total n	mean distance mm.	frequency zero distance
WFT WFS	248	9.41	462	6
WFT WMS	48	1.82	326	1
BFT WFS	23	.87	292	3
WFS WFP	283	10.75	178	98
WMS WFP	26	.99	443	2
WFT WFP	288	10.94	264	85
BFT WFP	12	0.46	129	4
WFS BFP	184	6.99	125	63
WMS BFP	14	.53	622	6
WFT BFP	129	4.90	154	40
BFT BFP	11	0.42	249	1
WFS WMP	383	14.55	306	104
WMS WMP	32	1.22	442	3
WFT WMP	335	12.72	342	100
BFT WMP	18	0.68	283	4
WFS BMP	347	13.18	136	171
WMS BMP	11	0.42	166	6
WFT BMP	225	8.55	249	67
BFT BMP	16	.61	466	3

WFT = a white female teacher  
 BFT = a Black female teacher  
 WFS = a white female student teacher  
 WMS = a white male student teacher  
 WFP = a white female pupil  
 BFP = a Black female pupil  
 WMP = a white male pupil  
 BMP = a Black male pupil

Figure 2. Behavior Patterns in Dyads:  
 Interpersonal Spatial Distance and Zero Distance

Dyadic Ss	n Dyads	Modal Angle of Orientation
WFT WFS	248	Ss at an angle of 90°
WFT WMS	48	Ss almost face to face, at an angle of 45°
BFT WFS	23	Ss at an angle of 90°
WFS WFP	283	Ss at an angle of 90°
WMS WFP	26	Ss facing each other
WFT WFP	288	Ss at an angle of 90°
BFT WFP	12	Ss at an angle of 90°
WFS BFP	184	Ss at an angle of 90°
WMS BFP	14	Ss at an angle of 135°
WFT BFP	129	Ss at an angle of 90°
BFT BFP	11	Ss at an angle of 90°
WFS WMP	383	Ss at an angle of 90°
WMS WMP	32	Ss side by side (180° angle)
WFT WMP	335	Ss at an angle of 90°
BFT WMP	18	Ss at an angle of 90°
WFS BMP	347	Ss at an angle of 90°
WMS BMP	11	Ss side by side (180° angle)
WFT BMP	225	Ss at an angle of 90°
BFT BMP	16	Ss facing each other

WFT = a white female teacher  
 BFT = a Black female teacher  
 WFS = a white female student teacher  
 WMS = a white male student teacher  
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 WMP = a white male pupil  
 BMP = a Black male pupil

Figure 3. Behavior Patterns in Dyads: Interpersonal Angle of Orientation.

Dyadic Ss	Modal Gaze	
	S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>2</sub>
WFT WFS	eye contact/eye contact	
WFT WMS	at media/at media	
BFT WFS	eye contact/perip'	
WFS WFP	at media/at media	
WMS WFP	peripheral/at media	
WFT WFP	at media/at media	
BFT WFP	at media/at media	
WFS BMP	at media/at media	
WMS BFP	at media/at media	
WFT BFP	at media/at media	
BFT BFP	at media/at media	
WFS WMP	at media/at media	
WMS WMP	peripheral/at media	
WFT WMP	at media/at media	
BFT WMP	at media/at media	
WFS BMP	at media/at media	
WMS BMP	peripheral/peripheral	
WFT BMP	at media/at media	
BFT BMP	at media/at media	

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Figure 4. Behavior Patterns in Dyads: Gaze.